

JANUARY 30, 2018

Nurturing Gratitude

When our child demands a toy or refuses to cooperate, it can feel like we're raising one of the less-appealing characters offsite link from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Children's demands can hit especially hard when we're working long hours to make ends meet—or just trying to get dinner on the table. We're also reminded of how much need there is among families in our own communities and around the world. While young children can't yet see the world from somebody else's perspective, we can begin to build a sense of gratitude starting in the toddler years.

Here are some ideas on how to model gratitude and create family traditions that focus on values of thankfulness and generosity:

- **Show appreciation to your children.** Slow down and observe more closely. You'll see things you appreciate about your kids—then tell them! Appreciation can be an even more powerful motivator than praise. Sharing appreciation is a strong way to feel connected to one another.
- **Show appreciation for others.** Never underestimate the power of your words and actions. Your children are paying attention to the way you treat others, whether it's friends, neighbors, a teacher, or the cashier at the market. They hear your tone with the salesperson on the phone. You set a great example when you model kindness, generosity, and gratefulness in your own everyday interactions.
- **Use the word "grateful."** Children need to learn what this new word means. Explain that being grateful is noticing something in your life that makes you happy. "I'm grateful that it's sunny today because it was raining yesterday." Mention gratitude when you're doing an everyday pleasant activity, like hanging out at the playground or eating watermelon on a hot day. Pause and say, "I'm so grateful for this day!" or "Wow, this is fun!" Your enthusiasm will be contagious.
- **Make a Thankful Tree.** Cut a tree trunk from cardboard or construction paper. Tape to a wall or window and cut out some leaf shapes. Ask your child to think of something they are thankful for and write one on each leaf. Then tape the leaf to a branch. Add your own "thankful things." You can ask November visitors to participate as well, by giving them each a leaf to hang on the tree, too.

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Disciplining Your Child

How do you keep a 1-year-old from heading toward the DVD player? What should you do when your preschooler throws a fit? How can you get a teenager to respect your authority? Whatever the age of your child, it's important to be consistent when it comes to discipline. If parents don't stick to the rules and consequences they set up, their kids aren't likely to either. *KidsHealth.org* shares ideas about how to vary your discipline approach to best fit your family.

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/discipline.html#cat20904>



Disciplining Your Special Needs Child

From the moment you heard the diagnosis, you knew life would be more challenging for your child than for most. So when you ask him to do something and it's not done, you let it go. Does he really need you to point out his limitations? Or maybe you fear that what you'd like him to do, or not do, is impossible for him to achieve? But here's the truth: If you feel that your child doesn't deserve discipline, it's like telling your child, "I don't believe you can learn." And if you don't believe it, how will your child? What experts call "behavior management" is not about punishing or demoralizing your child. Instead, it's a way to set boundaries and communicate expectations in a nurturing, loving way. Here are some strategies from *KidsHealth.org* to help parents discipline a child who has special needs.

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/discipline-special.html#cat168>

Is It a Cold or the Flu?



Your child is sent home from school with a sore throat, cough, and high fever — could it be the flu that's been going around? Or just a common cold? Although the flu (or influenza) usually causes symptoms that make someone feel worse than symptoms associated with a common cold, it's not always easy to tell the difference between the two. *KidsHealth.org* has a symptom guide to help parents determine whether a child is fighting the flu or combating a cold.

http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/flu_vs_cold.html#cat20904

Free Booklet for Parents on Childhood Injuries and Illnesses

Blank Children's Hospital has created a free publication to assist parents with caring for their child by recognizing signs of childhood illness and injury. This publication is available in both English and Spanish. To request a free copy of *Your Growing Child - A KidsHealth Guide to Injuries and Illnesses*, visit:

www.blankchildrens.org/growing-child-book-order-form.aspx



Respecting the Confidentiality of Children in Care and Their Families

Imagine you are standing in line at a grocery store and a stranger asks you a question about one of the children in your care. Before you answer, think about how you would feel if a friend told a stranger something personal about you or your family.

We all deserve privacy, even in these days of various social media. (For more about that, see our tip sheet, *The 411 on Social Media, Networking and Texting!*)

To maintain confidentiality, Wisconsin has laws to protect the private information of children and families involved in the child welfare system. These laws pertain to foster parents and specify what can and cannot be said, as well as what the consequences could be if confidentiality is broken.

Respecting confidentiality helps build relationships with the child and the child's birth family by showing respect for all of the family members and their personal stories.

What are Some of the Key Points?

- Foster parents cannot provide information to people who are not authorized to receive it. If you have any questions about if a person has the authority to receive the information or how to answer a particular question, refer the person to the child's case worker.
- Foster children cannot be photographed or interviewed by the media without written permission from their parents or legal guardian. (Foster parents are not the legal guardians, but kids in care are placed with foster families by a legal court order.)
- Foster parents cannot speak to media about children placed in their home.
- If there's no need to specify that a child is in the foster care system when introducing him or her, don't identify him as such.

For example, if you're at a church or a social event and shaking hands with greeters, you can simply say, "Hi I'm Chris Smith and these are my kids, Ty, Rose, and Jay."

But if you're meeting a doctor or dentist for the first time, it might be helpful for you to let him or her know that you might not know the full history of the children in your care because they're in foster care.

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Adoption Respite Program

If your adoption is subsidized by the State of Iowa - you have 5 days of respite available.

To see more information and find the Adoption Respite Billing forms for your area of the state—[click here](#)